

POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE

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An historical celebration of Queen's Park



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Ontario's Parliament Building at Queen's Park has been the scene of royal visits, patriotic celebrations and public gatherings ever since it was completed nearly one hundred years ago. Since its opening on April 4, 1893, it has seen Ontario citizens and the province's visitors flock to the park to welcome royalty, wave the flag for Canada's fighting forces and celebrate national occasions with parades, spectacles and fireworks.

On the outside, the solid symmetry of this building lends itself to a variety of decorations. Over the years, banners have hung from the Romanesque arches and flags have flown in appointed places along the front. On one occasion hundreds of tiny lights outlined the building against a night sky. Horse drawn carriages have been, and still are, seen here. Civilians in ceremonial robes have marched into the building and kilted and uniformed members of the services have assembled on the lawns.

But it is not only the privileged and the powerful who have been seen at Queen's Park. In Ontario, the seat of government has been a place where citizens from every walk of life have felt they could come, and the building and grounds have witnessed crowded festivals celebrating Canada Day and the victorious return of Canadian soldiers, sailors, and airmen from two World Wars.

Solemn events, too, have taken place here. Several times, memorial services have been held to observe the death of a monarch, and citizens have held devotional services on the grounds. Frequently, flags are flown at half mast to mark the death of an important public figure.

The government of Ontario is carried on inside the Parliament Building, which is the home of the Legislative Assembly of the Province. Here pageantry and tradition continue to play an important role. For the opening of each session of the Assembly, the Lieutenant Governor drives to Queen's Park in a horse drawn landau, and his arrival is recognized with a 15 gun salute. He then inspects the Guard of Honour, which is made up of a unit of the Canadian Forces and is drawn up outside the front of the building. Following the inspection, the official party proceeds into the Legislature for the opening of the session which is highlighted by the reading of the Speech from the Throne by the Lieutenant Governor.

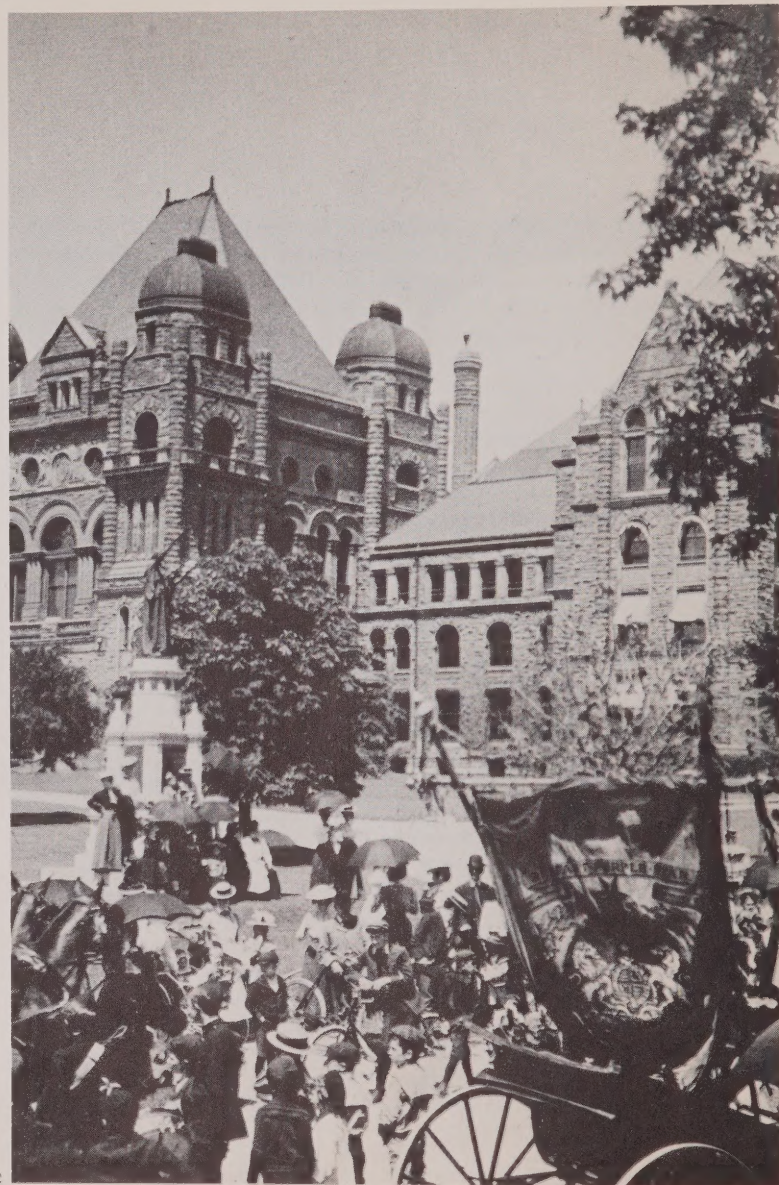
This book will give a historical view of some of the events that have taken place against the background of Queen's Park and within the Parliament Building. A history that is rich in variety and colour is captured in this collection of photographs.

Pomp and Circumstance:

An historical celebration of Queen's Park

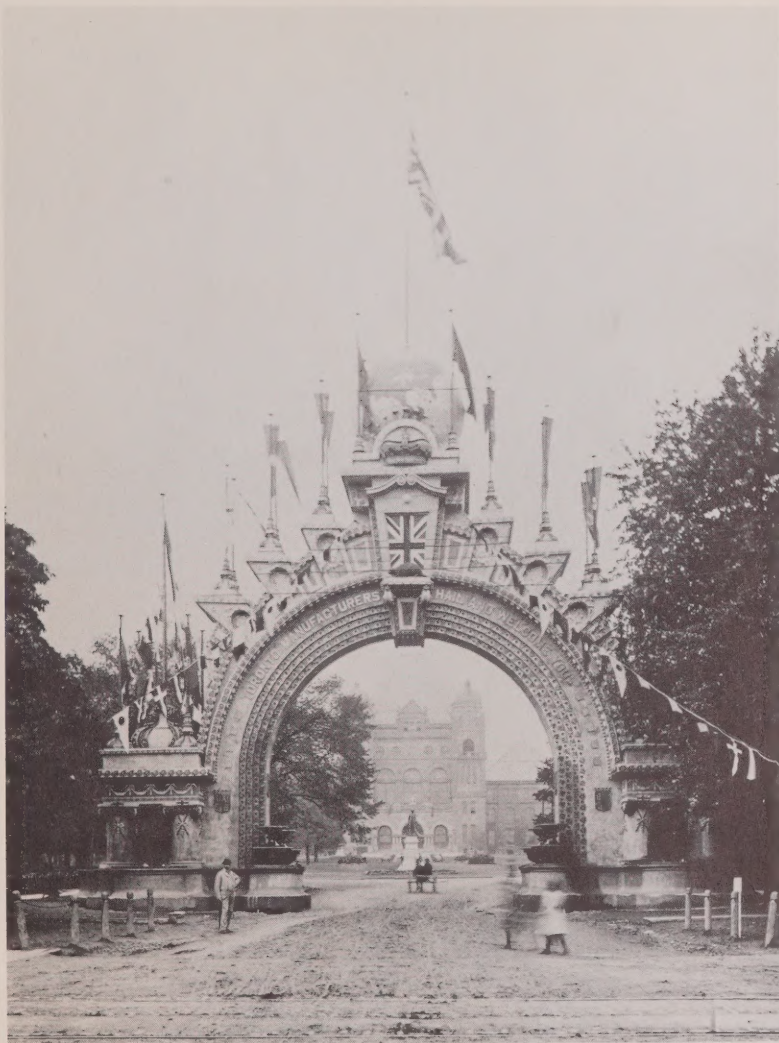


1 The return of Canadian heroes from the Boer War in 1899 was an extremely patriotic occasion. Loyalty to the Crown, and pride in the new Canadian identity are shown in the combined use of the crown and maple leaves in the decorations.



2 The Parliament Building has always been a popular location for parades. These well dressed citizens are watching the Orange Day parade around 1900.

The Visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York



3

3 The visit on October 11, 1901 by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York was celebrated in a fashion suitable for the future King George V. The Manufacturers' Arch, erected to the South of Queen's Park for the occasion, was topped with a globe and bedecked with flags and illuminations.

The first occasion on which royalty came to Queen's Park was on October 11, 1901, when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York came on a visit. The royal couple, who were later to reign as King George V and Queen Mary, took part in two events: the planting of a maple tree to the northwest of the building in the morning, and a large evening reception. The spectacular decoration of the park and the building for this occasion was also a first. Thousands of people were drawn to the head of University Avenue to see the Manufacturers' Arch, through which could be seen the Parliament Building. At night, the front of the building was illuminated by a host of tiny lights which transformed its massive shape into a soft glow. In the surrounding park, the trees carried masses of red Chinese lanterns which shone against the colours of the trees.

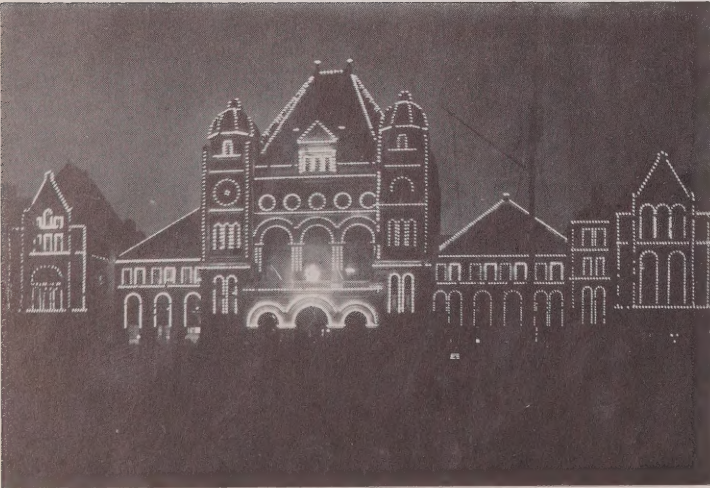
After a dinner in the Parliament Building, the Duke and Duchess took part in a gruelling two hour reception. They received thousands of people, including Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier, and prominent citizens, all with their wives. The Duke wore the full dress uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet, while the Duchess was described as wearing a coronet of diamonds and a magnificent necklace, and on her gown the Ribbon of the Order of Victoria and Albert.

In the Legislative Chamber, where the reception was held, red, white, and blue bunting covered the fronts of the four galleries and dozens of coloured streamers ran between the north and south walls. At intervals, shields emblazoned with the Union Jack supported standards containing British and Canadian flags. The highlight of the decorations was the Speaker's Throne, where the dais was completely covered by palms, ferns, and plants. The throne itself was surmounted by a golden dome, and here their Royal Highnesses stood to receive the guests, while the Governor General, Lord Minto, with Lady Minto, stood to the left. Perhaps there has never been an event at the Parliament Building which has equalled this one in colour, though others have rivalled it in patriotic excitement. From the crowds outside to the distinguished guests within, people were eager to show their loyalty and affection to the Duke and Duchess who were later to reign as their King and Queen.

5 The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York visited the University of Toronto, October 11, 1901. The Parliament Building can be seen in the background.



5



4

4 For the visit of the Duke and Duchess, the front of the building was decorated from the ground floor windows to the apex of the roof with hundreds of small lights. One observer claimed that, “the Toronto welcome was the prettiest he had ever seen.” It was the only time the building has ever been illuminated in this fashion.



6



Monument, Queen's Park, Toronto.

7



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6 Mourning decorations for Queen Victoria, 1901.

7 Ontario's recognition of the role played by Queen Victoria was illustrated by the noble statue unveiled on May 27, 1903. This post-card view shows The Hon. Richard Harcourt, Minister of Education, (centre) and the official party at the ceremony.

8 May 24, Queen Victoria's birthday, has always been a major holiday and a time for patriotic celebration. Here, The Governor General, the Duke of Connaught takes part in a ceremony in honour of Boer War veterans in 1911.





10

9, 10 & 11 On September 1, 1909 fire swept the west wing of the Parliament Building. The legislative Library was completely destroyed, but the remainder of the building was spared. The extent of the fire and the resulting damage can be seen in these photographs.



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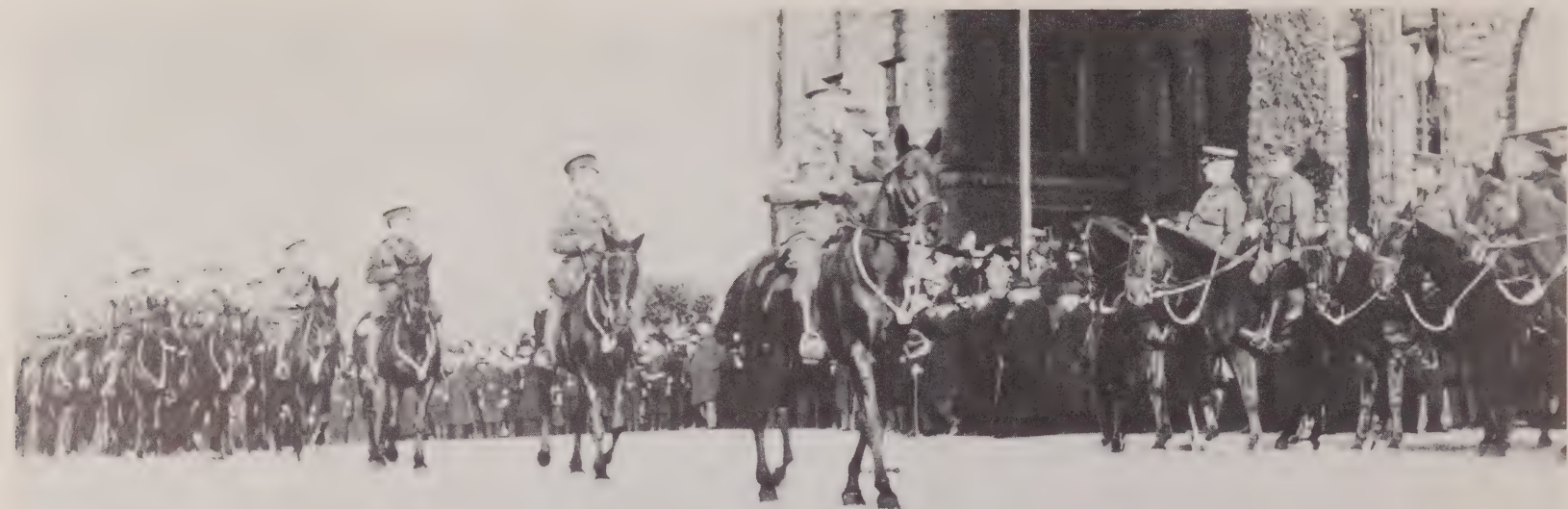
12



13

12 & 13 In May 1910, before the west wing was restored, a memorial service for King Edward VII was held. The Building was draped in mourning hangings and a service was conducted on the front grounds.





15

15 World War I cavalry is reviewed in front of the building in this 1915 photograph. The building was a focal point for many patriotic events between 1914 and 1918.



16

16 A Victory Bond parade assembles in the front of the Parliament Building prior to a rally in 1916.



17

17 Troops muster in Queen's Park before embarking for overseas service in the Great War.



18



19

18 & 19 Huge crowds for a patriotic rally featuring John Philip Sousa in concert at Queen's Park during World War I.



20

20 The Prince of Wales leaves the Parliament Building after visiting
in August 1919.



21 The Parliament Building at night showing decorations for the Coronation of George VI, December 12, 1936.

22 In May 22, 1939 King George VI, accompanied by Queen Elizabeth, made the first visit to Canada by a reigning monarch. One of the highlights of their cross-Canada tour was the welcome offered at the Ontario Parliament Building. Both the building and grounds were decorated with flags and banners to herald the historic occasion.



The Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, 1939

The visit by King George VI was the first by a reigning monarch to the Ontario Parliament Building. It was the occasion of a great outpouring of affection for the popular King and Queen and was an opportunity for thousands of people to pay tribute to them.

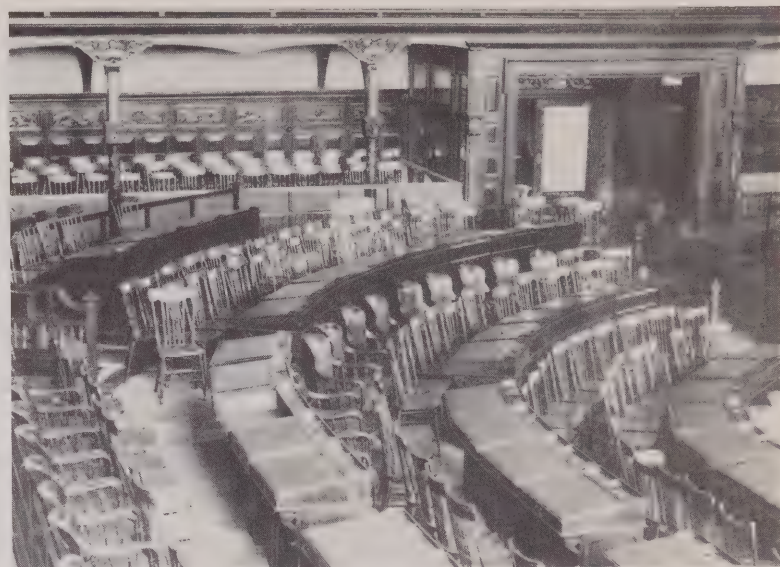
Decorations for this event were extensive and striking. North from College Street to the driveway in front of the building a line of masts carried alternating banners of red, white and blue, fringed with gold, and bearing the royal monogram and the crest of the province. They led to a royal blue canopied dais at the front of the building. The floor and steps were carpeted in royal red, and on the balcony above, the royal coat of arms was displayed, flanked with the arms of St. Andrew and St. George. Thirty-foot Union Jacks hung from the towers, and from the main cornice flew flags with the crosses of St. George, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick.

Inside the building, the Legislative Chamber had been recarpeted in royal red, and red damask hangings with gold tassels were placed in the huge arches at the north and south ends. The Speaker's chair, and the former Speaker's chair were upholstered in blue damask, and temporary staging increased the seating of the chamber to 1,103.

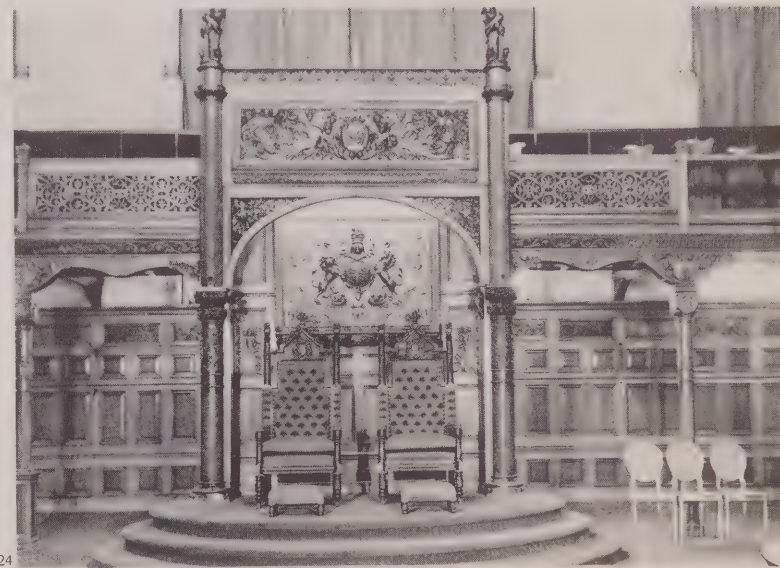
The King and Queen approached the Queen's Park from the south along the broad thoroughfare of University Avenue. Both sides of the street were lined with members of the militia, and along the way the crowds strained to catch a glimpse of the King and Queen as the motorcade moved along slowly.

When the procession circled the crescent and arrived in front of the Parliament Building, a fanfare of trumpets announced the arrival of the sovereign and his consort, and they were met by Premier Mitchell Hepburn. The royal party then proceeded up the red carpeted steps into the building, and up the staircase to the Legislative Chamber, the King escorting Mrs. Hepburn, while Mr. Hepburn escorted the Queen. Members stood as the King and Queen took their places on the dais. A unanimous resolution of greeting was then presented to their Majesties on behalf of the people of Ontario, and the Queen accepted a bouquet of lilies from the wife of Ian S. Strachan, M.P.P. Then 8 holders of the Victoria Cross were presented, followed by the Speaker, the Cabinet, Leader of the Opposition, members and their wives. Later, too, they met the Dionne quintuplets, when they had retired to the Lieutenant Governor's suite.

This visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was a landmark in the history of Queen's Park, and was remembered by all who were there as a particularly happy event in the period immediately before the outbreak of the Second World War.



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23 Seating was added to the Chamber in order to accommodate the huge crowd.

24 Thrones were placed side by side on the Speaker's dais for the King and Queen.

25 The King and Queen meet Premier Mitchell Hepburn and Mrs. Hepburn.

26 Mrs. Ian Strachan presents flowers to the Queen.



26



27 The Twenty-First Parliament was opened on February 21, 1944. In recognition of the tremendous contribution of the Canadian fighting forces during the War, representatives of the military were given places of honour on the floor of the House during the opening ceremonies.



28



29

29 Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip were given an enthusiastic welcome during their visit in October 1951. The building was decorated with flags and canopies to welcome the royal couple.

28 Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip leave the Parliament Building on October 12, 1951.

30 Princess Elizabeth visits the Lieutenant Governor's suite in the Parliament Building. From left to right, Mrs. Ray Lawson, Lieutenant Governor The Hon. Ray Lawson, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Philip, Mrs. Leslie Frost, The Hon. Leslie Frost, Premier of Ontario.





31

31, 32 & 33 Ontario bade a sad farewell to King George VI in February 1952. Hundreds of loyal subjects braved the cold to pay their respects in front of the Parliament Building. Canadian soldiers who had fought under King George VI take part in the Memorial service.



32

34 The Speaker's Throne is draped with mourning cloth in tribute to the late King, February 1952.



34



33



35 Ontario proudly celebrated the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth on June 22, 1953. The Parliament Building was lavishly decorated with flags and a huge Canadian Coat of Arms.



36

36 & 37 Thousands lined the roadway to take part in the Coronation parade. Canadians who had so loyally served the King, transfer their allegiance to his daughter Queen Elizabeth II.



37



38 The Duchess of Kent and Princess Alexandra visit The Lieutenant Governor's Suite, August 30, 1954.



39

39 Premier Frost, Princess Margaret, and Lieutenant Governor Keiller MacKay, July 30, 1958.

40 Princess Mary, aunt of Queen Elizabeth II, enters the main lobby of the Parliament Building with Lieutenant Governor Louis Breithaupt. Princess Mary was entertained at the Parliament Building during her official visit in October 1955. Colourful decorations were erected to mark the event.



40

41 Each year the building is decorated for the festive season. This 1958 photograph shows some imaginative lighting.





42

42 The building was decorated in honour of the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1959.



43

43 Queen Elizabeth II visited Toronto as part of her first Canadian tour as Queen. Here, crowds lined University Avenue to catch a glimpse of the procession.



44

44 On March 16, 1965 the Legislative Assembly of Ontario received a portrait of Sir Winston Churchill, to commemorate his resignation from the British House of Commons after 60 years of service. Mr. Andrew Thompson, Leader of the Opposition, responds to remarks by Premier John Robarts.



45

45 Prince Philip and Lieutenant Governor Rowe leave the building after a visit on November 9, 1967.

46 Prince Philip meets The Hon. Earl Rowe, Lieutenant Governor, Premier Robarts, and members of the Cabinet, March 21, 1966.



46

48 Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, waves to the crowd as she leaves Queen's Park with Lieutenant Governor Earl Rowe, June 1962.

47 Cannons line Queen's Park Crescent for the royal salute for the Queen Mother.



47 48



Canada's Centennial Year, 1967

When Canadians celebrated Canada's one hundredth birthday in 1967, nowhere was this celebration more evident than at Queen's Park.

For the entire year, the building was decked with flags and decorations of a Centennial theme. Massive banners were hung from both towers at the front of the building, each embossed with the provincial Coat of Arms and the distinctive trillium emblem of the provincial government. Crests for each of the ten provinces and the Canadian Coat of Arms were placed over the front arches. The focal point of the decoration was a huge, illuminated Centennial symbol. The symbol represented the unity of the provinces and the nation with a series of interlocking triangles and a central "stem".

The highlight of the centennial year was the celebration on Canada Day, July 1, 1967, when thousands of people gathered for parades, parties and celebrations. Queen's Park and the Parliament Building were at the centre of events and a massive birthday party was held on the front lawn. It was one of the largest and happiest events to take place in this setting and huge crowds of ordinary Ontarians helped to usher Canada into her second century.



49

49 Canada's Centennial was a time of celebration for all Canadians. The Parliament Building was extensively decorated for the year. The dates 1867-1967 were highlighted, and a mammoth Centennial symbol was illuminated.



50 Canada Day celebrations, July 1, 1967.



51

51 & 52 Toronto Mayor William Dennison, The Hon. John Robarts, Premier of Ontario, Robert Nixon MPP, Leader of the Opposition, Walter Pitman, MPP, Peterborough, proceed to the statue of Sir John A. MacDonald in celebrations marking his birthday on January 11, 1968.



52

Visits of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip

Queen Elizabeth II has visited Queen's Park and the Parliament Building first as Princess Elizabeth in 1951, then as Queen in 1959, and again in 1973. Each time she was accompanied by Prince Philip. On the last occasion, it was "Queen's weather" when her Majesty came to Queen's Park, where she was welcomed by Premier William Davis on June 26. The visit was particularly notable for two reasons. First, as a gift from the people of Ontario, the Queen was presented with a fully equipped playground at the Hospital for Sick Children, named in her honour "The Queen Elizabeth Playground".

The second memorable part of the visit took place when the Queen delighted the large crowd on the lawn by taking a stroll down the broad walk leading from the Parliament Building. She was accompanied by Premier Davis with other members of the party following. This warm and informal gesture enabled hundreds of people to have a close view of her, and of Prince Philip.

The people of Ontario look forward to future visits of her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, and of his Royal Highness, Prince Philip to Queen's Park.



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53, 54 & 55 Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip visit the Parliament Building on June 26, 1973 accompanied by Premier William Davis.

56 Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, accompanied by The Hon. Pauline McGibbon, and The Hon. William Davis, Premier, was met by large crowds on June 29, 1979.







57 Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother reviews the guard of honour during her visit on July 3, 1981.

58 The Queen Mother enters the Parliament Building during her 1979 visit.



59 Thousands of people throng to Queen's Park each year to celebrate Canada Day. This group is enjoying the sun July 1, 1982.



60

60 A mammoth tent was erected on Queen's Park to entertain the Annual Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on September 7, 1982.



61 A hot air balloon dropped in to mark the 200th anniversary of ballooning on November 22, 1983.



62

62 & 63 The opening of Parliament is always a great ceremony. The Hon. John Gibson, Lieutenant Governor, takes the salute at the opening of the Third Session of the thirteenth Parliament on February 18, 1914. On April 21, 1981, The Hon. John B. Aird, Lieutenant Governor, opened the First Session of the Thirty-first Parliament.



63



64

64 As the centre of political activity in Ontario, Queen's Park is often the site of heated political demonstrations. These citizens confront Premier John Robarts in 1967.

65 1984 marks the Bicentennial of the province of Ontario. The bicentennial flag is as evident throughout the province as it was for the opening of the Fourth Session of the Thirty-second Parliament March 20, 1984.



66 The Hon. John Aird, Lieutenant Governor,
arrives in the landau to open the Legislature,
March 20, 1984.





PHOTO CREDITS

- 1 Ontario Archives
- 2 Private Collection, David MacDonald
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- 12-19 James Collection, City of Toronto Archives
- 20 Ontario Archives
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- 24 & 25 Province of Ontario, Ministry of Government Services
- 26 & 27 Archives, York University, Telegram Collection
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- 70 & 71 Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Parliamentary and Public Relations

